

NEW YORK HERALD.

JAMES GORDON BENNETT,
PROPRIETOR AND EDITOR.

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TERMS: Each copy, 5 cents per copy, 10 per month, 25 per quarter, 75 per annum, in advance. Single copies, 5 cents. The weekly HERALD, except on Sundays, is sent free of charge to all subscribers. The daily HERALD, except on Sundays, is sent free of charge to all subscribers. The weekly HERALD, except on Sundays, is sent free of charge to all subscribers. The daily HERALD, except on Sundays, is sent free of charge to all subscribers.

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second trial of Louis Baker, charged with the murder of Bill Poole, was postponed until April next, on motion of the counsel for the accused. The trial of the other defendants will not take place until the case of Baker is disposed of.

The case of the competitors for the Controllorship—Messrs. Flagg and Giles—was yesterday postponed for twenty days, in order to accommodate the first named individual.

The democratic members of the Legislature of Maine have selected four declared anti-Pierce delegates at large to represent the democracy of that State in the National Convention to be held at Cincinnati.

More than one hundred men and about forty boats belonging to Havre de Grace, Md., are employed annually, through the proper season, in supplying the market with wild ducks. A letter on the subject may be found elsewhere.

The presence of ice yesterday in the rivers and docks continued, with the inclemency of the weather, tended seriously to check transactions in produce, and especially in breadstuffs. The sales of cotton embraced about 600 a 700 bales, without change in prices. Flour was heavy for common grades, and the turn of the market in favor of the buyer, while good medium and extra grades were unchanged. Wheat was steady, but not active. Missouri and Southern white sold at \$2 12, and prime Tennessee red was reported at \$1 98. Corn sold to a limited extent, the sales being restricted to small parcels Southern white and New Orleans mixed. Sugar and coffee were steady, with moderate transactions. Freight engagements were light, while rates were without change of moment.

Our Coast Defences—What they are and what they should be.

We are, fortunately, so far removed from the convulsions which distract the Old World, and our people are so diligently following the sagacious advice of Iago, "Put money in thy purse," that it is next to impossible to induce any large portion of the community to think seriously of our frontier defences, particularly those of our sea coast. The subject is important, and sooner or later it must be considered. Indeed, the aspect of our foreign relations would seem to indicate that the time for considering it is at hand. True, it has not entirely escaped the notice of the general government.

If the Eastern war has demonstrated any one thing more clearly than all others, it is the importance of fortifications for the defence of harbors. What but the fortifications of Cronstadt have saved St. Petersburg? What prevented the allied fleets from destroying Sebastopol but the fortifications of that harbor? We, too, have our fortifications; our government has expended millions of money in erecting them at the most important points along our coast. From Eastport, Maine, to New Orleans and on the Lakes, we have about fifty-four forts or fortifications; a large majority of them are completed; the others far advanced towards completion. Others are planned and will no doubt be erected. So far, well. But having constructed these works at an enormous cost, we have left them wide open to be occupied by any enterprising naval power with which we may happen to be at war.

That this is not an exaggerated assertion a few facts will show. It is admitted that for the defence of these forts it is necessary to have in each a well-trained artillery force. The engineers who planned and constructed them estimate that to man the guns in these fortifications fifty-four thousand artillerymen will be required. This force is of course exclusive of the troops constituting the main body of an army, the infantry and cavalry. The President, in his late message, says that the artillery arm is a "specialty"—"whilst other troops may be raised, organized and equipped for active service in a comparatively short space of time, it requires years of study and practice to form a good artillery force. Now, it happens, that at this time we have in the forts, from Eastport to New Orleans, only about six hundred artillerymen. Of these, two small companies (say 100 men) are in Boston, and the same in New York harbor; two field batteries, not intended for garrison service, at Baltimore; two small companies of about fifty men each at Fort Monroe, and the same number in Charleston harbor, and one company at Key West. The forts on the coasts of Maine and New Hampshire are unoccupied. The splendid fortification at Newport, R. I., is without a garrison, and the same is true of the works on Long Island Sound. Forts Mifflin and Washington are abandoned, giving free access by water to Philadelphia and Washington. The works on the coast of North Carolina, at the entrance to Savannah river and at St. Augustine, are deserted. The same is true of the works commanding the entrance to Mobile bay and the approaches to New Orleans. The three forts constructed at Pensacola are unoccupied, and the Navy Yard at that place exposed to capture. The few works which are occupied have scarcely troops enough to keep them in a proper state of police, and would offer but little obstacle to an enemy who might be disposed to seize them. There is absolutely little or nothing to prevent a hostile fleet from running into Boston or New York harbors, and destroying property the value of which would maintain for years adequate garrisons in the forts in those harbors. The English or French may, on any day of the year, throw into forts Adams and Monroe garrisons which could hold those places a very long time against any force we could send against them. These assertions may seem wild and extravagant to many. But let those persons, before coming to that conclusion, carefully study the subject, and their views may be somewhat modified.

The belief is very prevalent that it is not necessary to maintain even small garrisons in our permanent works—that our citizen soldiery are fully equal to the task of defending them. The President, it would seem, thinks differently. He regards that service as a specialty, requiring years of study and practice. With what degree of patience our volunteers would submit, even in time of war, to being cooped up between stone walls, remains to be seen. How they would manage and serve the heavy guns is also a question for grave consideration. But the idea that a volunteer force could be relied on to defend those places, proceeds on the supposition that our enemy will give us due notice of their intention to attack them—that there will be a formal declaration of war, giving us time to organize our volunteer artillery. But have we any right to proceed on that supposition? Did we declare war against Mexico? If our memory serves us, we only resolved that by the act of Mexico war existed. Many of our wisest and more experienced statesmen—Mr. Calhoun amongst them—opposed the passage of the resolution, declared that it asserted a falsehood, that war did not exist; but nevertheless the war went on. Now, it does not require any very great stretch of the imagination to suppose a contin-

gency in which our example may be followed by our enemy. Suppose that England and France should undertake to guarantee to Spain the possession of Cuba, as it is said they have done; and then suppose them to take offense at some act of ours—a filibustering expedition to Cuba, for instance—and to declare that by the act of the United States war existed. The steamers bringing the news might, and probably would, bring troops ready organized for the occupation of the more important works on our coast. The idea of having a foreign foe occupying one of our permanent fortifications is so repugnant to all of our feelings that we at once exclaim: "Such a thing shall never be; we would rise up and hurl them from our soil!" But any intelligent gentleman who will take the trouble to examine Fort Adams or Monroe will readily see that if those places are once properly manned by English or French troops it would be a most difficult task to dislodge them. To form a correct idea of what the difficulties of the task would be, study carefully the operations of the Allies at Cronstadt and Sebastopol.

This subject ought to command the special attention of gentlemen of the South and Southwest. Indeed, it ought not to escape the notice of the Southern Commercial Convention, appointed soon to meet in the capital of the Old Dominion. The amount of produce which finds its way to market by entering and passing over the Gulf of Mexico, is so vast that the whole country is alive to the importance of our commanding the entrances to that gulf. It is regarded as so important that a very large portion of our people would